

WHATCOM COUNTY**Parks & Recreation**

3373 Mount Baker Highway
Bellingham, WA 98226-7500



Bennett Knox, Director

Christ Thomsen, Operations Manager

To: The Honorable County Executive Satpal Singh Sidhu and Honorable Members of the County Council

From: Bennett Knox, Parks Director 

Date: November 21, 2025

Re: Joint Resolution to Adopt the Lake Whatcom Watershed Forest Management Plan

Enclosed is a Joint City/County Resolution requesting adoption of the Lake Whatcom Watershed Forest Management Plan (attached as Exhibit A).

Requested Action

Whatcom County Parks & Recreation respectfully requests that Whatcom County Council adopt the forest management plan developed in partnership with the City of Bellingham for County (and City) properties with the Lake Whatcom watershed.

Background and Purpose

On September 24, 2024 the County entered into a contract with Northwest Natural Resource Group for development of a forest management plan for the Lake Whatcom watershed (contract #202409046). This contract included consideration of both Whatcom County and City of Bellingham parcels as governed by an Interlocal Agreement (#202409022). Both this contract and the Interlocal agreement were subsequently amended include consideration of additional city-owned properties (contract #202409046-1 and #202409022-1, respectively).

The purpose of the Lake Whatcom Forest Management Plan is to provide an actionable document that guides management activities and provides recommendations for the long-term management of County and City-owned forestlands within the Lake Whatcom Watershed.

This forest management plan:

- Focuses on actions that positively impact and safeguard water quality and forest health and otherwise supports the goals and objectives of the current Lake Whatcom multi-parameter Total Maximum Daily Load to meet water quality standards, Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, City of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, and Lake Whatcom Management Program Work Plan;
- Presents management strategies and stand-level prescriptions that utilize Best Management Practices to improve forest health, improve water quality and watershed health, increase fire resistance, preserve and protect critical and unique habitats, and reduce the risk of mass wasting/debris torrent events;

- Addresses issues affecting timely and efficient implementation, including the consideration of budgetary and other resource/capacity needs associated with management activities in order to inform County and City decision-making;
- Addresses potential issues affecting implementation and/or outcomes including those potentially associated with climate change and adjoining land use practices.

Funding Amount and Source

This resolution is for plan adoption and does not include a request for additional funding.

Please contact me at x-5855 if you have any questions or concerns regarding this resolution.

Encl.